horn. It seems probable, too, that negro slaves were brought by the Arabs to China and sold there.

Whether many Chinese merchants journeyed to foreign lands seems very doubtful. We know that for at least a time under Tai Tsung an imperial rescript forbade Chinese going abroad—from which it may be fair to assume that some were in the habit of doing so. Chinese knowledge of the geography of neighboring lands was increasing, but, with the one exception to be noted in a moment, the accounts that have come down to us in any complete form appear not to have been derived through first-hand observation but from the kind of information which might seep through from aliens.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE T^ANGI

BUDDHIST PILGRIMS AND MISSIONARIES

This one exception is important. The journeys continued which, as we have seen, had been made to India by Chinese Buddhists from at least the close of the fourth century. Probably the most important and certainly the best known of the Buddhist pilgrims of the T'ang was he whose religious name was Hsiian-tsang.

Hsiian-tsang was born in Honan in the first decade of the seventh century, the son of a learned official. Reared in the Confucian tradition, in his youth he was converted to Buddhism and became distinguished as a teacher of the faith. Dissatisfied with his knowledge, he wished to elucidate to his own satisfaction debated points of doctrine by inquiry and study in the land where Buddhism had had its birth. In spite of the imperial prohibition of foreign travel, in the year 629 he left for India, going by the overland route through the Tarim basin. In India he visited many of the sites made sacred by the life,

teachings, and death of the Buddha, studied with experts, and collected sacred books. After an absence of about sixteen years, he returned to China, also overland, and spent the nearly twenty remaining years of his life in teaching and in translating some of the books which he had brought back with him. The amount of literature whose translation is ascribed to him is stupendous—about twenty-five times as voluminous as the Christian Bible. He gave a great impetus to the popularity and spread of Buddhism in China. In such esteem was he held that two of the Emperors wrote prefaces